

# VETERANS UPDATE

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## VA HEALTH CARE TO GO SMOKE-FREE



The Department of Veterans Affairs will implement a new policy restricting smoking by patients, visitors, volunteers, contractors and vendors at health care facilities starting in October.

There is growing evidence that smoking and secondhand smoke pose significant medical risks, and the new policy will help VA ensure

the health and well-being of both patients and staff.

"We are not alone in recognizing the importance of creating a smoke-free campus," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "As of 2014, 4,000 health care facilities and four national health care systems in the U.S. have implemented smoke-free grounds."

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Aug. 15, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., Joint Veteran Town Hall**, 5th floor auditorium, main hospital, 830 Chalkstone Ave. Get updates from VA New England Director Ryan Lilly, as well as leadership from the Providence VAMC, VBA Regional Office and R.I. Office of Veterans Affairs. Note: this meeting has been rescheduled from Aug. 7.

The smoke-free policy will apply to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, any other combustion of tobacco, and electronic nicotine delivery systems, such as e-cigarettes, vape pens or e-cigars.

For help with quitting, ask your primary care provider or call the VA Quitline at 855-QUIT-VET (855-784-8838).

## URGENT CARE FOR ENROLLED VETERANS

Enrolled Veterans can now get urgent care for minor injuries and illnesses through VA community providers.

The benefit covers treatment of non-emergent symptoms, such as coughs and colds, wheezing, sprains, sore throats, painful urination, bumps and bruises, ear pain, and mild skin irritations.

You must have received VA care within 24 months. Call 833-483-8669 to check your eligibility.

To find the VA-network urgent care locations closest to you, call 866-620-2071 or visit <https://vaurgentcarelocator.triwest.com/>



## THETA-BURST STIMULATION FOR PTSD



Dr. Noah S. Philip, director of Psychiatric Neuromodulation at the Providence VA Medical Center, and Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University, demonstrates theta burst transcranial magnetic stimulation with Emily Aiken, a research assistant at the Providence VAMC, Oct. 2, 2017. (Providence VA Medical Center photo by Tori Larson)

**T**heta-burst stimulation may be a promising new treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder, commonly known as PTSD, according to a new study published by researchers at the Providence VA Medical Center June 24.

"Theta-Burst Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," was published in the American Journal of Psychiatry, summarizing a controlled study of 50 Veterans with PTSD. Transcranial magnetic stimulation has previously shown promise as a treatment for PTSD, and intermittent theta-burst stimulation, or iTBS, is a new, more rapid process that has been shown to be effective in treating depression.

Outcomes measured in the study included comparing changes in PTSD symptoms, depression, and social and occupational function in participants, compared with a control group who only received simulated treatment. The team was also able to identify participants

most likely to improve with iTBS using functional magnetic resonance imaging, also known as MRI.

"Our results indicate that iTBS appears to be a promising new treatment for PTSD, a condition more common among Veterans than in the general population," said lead researcher Dr. Noah S. Philip, director of Psychiatric Neuromodulation at the Providence VA Medical Center, and Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University. "Further investigation is needed, to develop the optimal treatment course and duration."

The study was supported by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs grants, and the VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Service's Center for Neurorestoration and Neurotechnology at the Providence VA Medical Center.

More details about the study can be found online at <https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.ajp.2019.18101160>.



### Providence VA Medical Center

830 Chalkstone Ave  
Providence, RI 02908  
401-273-7100

Veteran's Crisis Line:  
800-273-8255 press 1

Patient Call Center (PCC):  
401-457-3336

Pharmacy Call Center:  
866-400-1241

Office of Community Care  
401-273-7100 ext. 3015

Account Balances:  
401-457-3344

VA Benefits Information  
800-827-1000

Website:  
[www.providence.va.gov](http://www.providence.va.gov)

Facebook:  
[facebook.com/VAProvidence](https://facebook.com/VAProvidence)

Twitter:  
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